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SHOULD SCHOOLS TREAT NONSCHOOL PROBLEMS?

The welfare-state professionals are on the march. They have a new strategy to achieve their goal of cradle-to-grave dependency for everyone.

This dependency would extend from birth through school years, through job selection and through senior citizen years. It would include comprehensive socialized health care, socialized nurseries, socialized job placement, and socialized activities at every age level in competition with private-enterprise services.

This plan was revealed in a 22-page proposed "Policy Statement" written by New York's State Education Department and presented to New York's Board of Regents in late 1985. It's a plan to co-opt the public schools and transform them into a "school-based delivery system" which will house a tax-funded "network" of agencies and institutions.

The school's "more traditional activities," including "basic literacy instruction" will still be provided, but that will be only one part of a "continuum" of public school responsibilities for "unemployment, poverty, incarceration, malnutrition, and dependency on public welfare." Of course, "new programs will be proposed as needed to enable schools to develop their important role as bases of operation for community renewal services."

This is called "one-stop shopping for individuals in need of diverse services." The Policy Statement calls the school "a common locus for an array of community, educational, employment, cultural and social service agencies." It will provide day care, latchkey services, pre-kindergarten, intergenerational learning, education for parents, counseling, guidance, job placement, and community reeducation.

The argument is made that many individuals "lack the skills and information required to getting and keeping a job" and therefore "counseling, guidance and job placement are necessary elements in the continuum of services needed to become gainfully employed." What nonsense! To be gainfully employed, young people must first be taught to read and write, add and subtract, the traditional mission of the public school.

The services "should have strong educational, recreational, nutritional, cultural and

preventive health care components." Will the government now determine culture and nutrition? "Preventive health care components" mean birth control and abortion clinics.

The new "school-based delivery system" will contain "Health Clinics" to provide "a full range of school-based preventive and basic health care services to ... offer non-threatening access to health care for adolescent students." This means the schools will dispense free contraceptives and abortion referrals to teenagers without the "threat" of parental knowledge or consent.

The new "school-based delivery system" will provide "Nurseries for Teen Parents." That means the schools will provide child-care service for promiscuous teenagers.

The plan of action calls for moving first into ghetto areas. Typically, the social welfare professionals use the poor as guinea pigs for experimental programs and as bait with which to lobby legislators. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has already financed two New York schools to become "Community Education Resource Centers."

The Policy Statement reveals that "the ghetto thus provides a ready-made clientele for the wide range of services needed." Like all professionals, the social welfare providers push constantly to increase services to "clients" and expand their numbers.

Aren't the American taxpayers already providing welfare services at generous levels? The defect in the present system, says the Policy Statement, is that current services are "directed to meet individual needs by way of individual entitlements, ignoring the fact that the community at-large is also at risk."

After the schools are turned into a "comprehensive delivery system," here is how its chief executive will function. "A site coordinator who need not be a school administrator, would have responsibility for assuring a collegial working relationship among participating agencies" (that means making sure that welfare priorities are paramount), "overcoming obstacles to the delivery of services" (that means overriding parental rights), and "assessing clientele perceptions" (that means making sure that tax funding will increase to meet the rising expectations of the "clients").

The New York Policy Statement constitutes an arrogant edict to educators that "schools must address nonschool problems" and combine "educational and noneducational services in a comprehensive manner." But isn't the school's primary mission to address <u>school</u> problems and teach children basic skills and knowledge?